2022–2023

Winter Celebration

Featuring the Anchorage Youth Symphony with concerto competition winner Ben Liu, piano

Maestro Bruce Wood, Ph.D., Music Director

Sunday ♫ Mar. 5, 2023 ♫ 4:00 pm
Discovery Theater

Alaska Center for the Performing Arts
WE CATER TO EVERY CRAVING

Alaska Youth Orchestras
Building a community where music education and performance are valued and shared.

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Alaska Youth Orchestras
1505 W 32nd Ave, Anchorage, AK 99503
www.AlaskaYouthOrchestras.org
907-538-6406
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- Albert Einstein

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Emily Weaver, oboe
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Katie Wasko-Klink, violin
Brett Lindsay*, cello
Miriam English Ward, viola
Ali Strand, clarinet

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Music has been a part of most of Ben Liu’s life. Four-year-old Ben fell in love with the piano after hearing his grandmother’s performances of the theme song of his favorite game show, Jeopardy! When he was in first grade, he even composed and performed a short piece for his elementary school.

Ben has honed his skills with guidance from multiple piano instructors, starting with his grandmother and now, Rumi Smith, for the past seven years. Ben has won several piano competition awards in the Alaska State Piano Competition and MTNA competitions. Ben also plays the cello, studying under Joy Kil. He has performed with the Anchorage Youth Symphony for the last four years.

Ben has pursued rigorous study in mathematical and statistical analysis and has applied his knowledge to solving real world problems, from analyzing court rulings and healthcare data to building robust economic models. Ben will graduate from Robert Service High School in May as the salutatorian of his class. He plans to pursue a double major in Applied Mathematics and Biomedical Engineering in hopes of combining his passion for mathematics, computing/AI, and problem-solving with medicine to engineer future healthcare solutions. Ben also plans to explore music in college by performing in ensembles and taking music courses.
Biography

Maestro Bruce Wood, Ph.D.

Dr. Bruce Wood was appointed Music Director of the Alaska Youth Orchestras in July of 2021. Dr. Wood was the founding Music Director of the Youth Orchestras of Lubbock, Texas while also serving on the faculty of Texas Tech University. From 2014 to 2021 Dr. Wood was the Director of Fine Arts for the Anchorage School District.

Dr. Wood received a bachelor’s degree in music education from Morningside College in Sioux City, Iowa and his master’s and doctorate from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Dr. Wood has taught in public school settings for eleven years and at the university level for over twenty-five years. He has been published by the American String Teachers’ Journal, Strings Magazine, and GIA publications.

A cellist and singer, Dr. Wood has been a member of the Alaska Chamber Singers. He has also conducted a number of the performances of the Anchorage Community Chorus Messiah. Dr. Wood’s wife, Brooke, works for the Anchorage Museum.

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A Note from our Board President

On behalf of the AYO Board of Directors, we are pleased to welcome you to tonight’s Winter Celebration Concert. I am honored and humbled to serve as your board president and look forward to celebrating tonight’s concert with you.

Tonight’s concert features Ben Liu on piano, AYO’s 2022-2023 season concerto competition winner. I know we will be blown away!

Thank you to the numerous donors and sponsors who made tonight’s concert possible. Save the date of May 19 for our annual fundraiser “Classics and Cocktails” and join us in making classical music alive and vibrant for Alaska’s future generation.

We hope you enjoy tonight’s performance and look forward to seeing you on May 19.

With gratitude,

Josie Wilson

2022-2023 Board Chair
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The Anchorage Symphony Orchestra is funded, in part, by the Atwood Foundation, Richard L. and Diane M. Block Foundation, Satterwhite Foundation, The Carr Foundation, National Endowment for the Arts, Alaska State Council on the Arts, Municipality of Anchorage, and through the generosity of many individuals and corporate community leaders.
Welcome to my favorite concert of the season! There’s nothing quite like seeing our musicians on stage creating musical magic.

Tonight you get to see a HUGE moment in one of our musician’s lives, performing a concerto with a symphony. This is something most musicians never have the chance to do and it’s unlike any other musical experience. From college applications to resume building, this performance will benefit our soloist in many ways for years to come.

This is also a nostalgic concert for me. It was the same weekend in March of 2020 that AYS took the stage for the last concert held in the Performing Arts Center before the pandemic. A year and a half later, AYS was the first group to perform for an audience in the Performing Arts Center when things reopened. I am immensely proud of all that’s been accomplished since then. From our musicians and their families, to our staff and board, Alaska Youth Orchestras has adapted, grown, and excelled throughout the past 3 years.

Thank you for celebrating with us tonight. We hope to see you on May 19 for our Classics & Cocktails fundraiser and on May 20 for our season finale, the Spring Celebration Concert!

Denise Brown-Gellas
After School Music
A program of Alaska Youth Orchestras
providing inspiration to hundreds of future musicians in partnership with

Camp Fire Alaska

Major funding provided by the Carr Foundation and a Community Partnership Grant from the Alaska State Council on the Arts and the National Endowment for the Arts, with additional support provided by Rasmuson Foundation.
Join us for our second annual fundraising event benefiting music education and performance! You’ll enjoy a fun evening featuring delicious bites and sips by Ginger, a silent and live auction, and a private concert by the Anchorage Youth Symphony including a piece conducted by the evening’s winning Maestro for a Minute bidder!

Dress: Formal wear, Business wear, or Alaskan chic!
Live Music provided by The Chamberliners and The Anchorage Youth Symphony

Symphony Level Table - $2000
A seated table (8 guests) featuring table service

Orchestra Level Table - $750
A standing cocktail table (4 guests) featuring buffet service

Individual Admission - $100

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www.AlaskaYouthOrchestras.org
Anchorage Youth Symphony
A program of Alaska Youth Orchestras
serving high school and college age musicians with a
professional performance experience
Funded in part by a generous grant from the Atwood Foundation
When the symphony orchestra first started rehearsing for this concert, I could tell they really were enjoying the pieces chosen program. They include the depth of artistic expression in the Mendelssohn and Schubert, the fun of the Brahms and Von Suppe, and a touch of over-the-top romanticism in the Cassadó. Evan and I have enjoyed working on all of them. Our sincere hope is that this music communicates each piece’s intent and, by doing that, helps each of understand a little more of what it means to be human.

Bruce Wood
Anchorage Youth Symphony

**Violin 1**
Kestrel Wigglesworth  
*Co-concertmaster*
Matthew Nagel  
*Co-concertmaster*
Nate Gartland
Bryce Herda
Benjamin Strauss
Dylan Beals
Ingrid Berryhill
Elias Soule
Yaoxiang Yu
Amelia Harris
Madison Chaitoff
Hailey Smith
Isaac Dodge*

**Violin 2**
Rania White  
*Co-principal*
Andy Zhang  
*Co-principal*
John Armstrong
Sahid Talome Dewees
Sarah Kim
Peter Hobbie
Gabriel Clingingsmith
Rebekah Renner
Elizabeth Moreau
Aurora Panilo
Anna Taylor
Bruno Bookman
Catalina Whited
Audrey Schirard
Mira Olds

**Cello**
Bentley Altman  
*Co-principal*
Josiah Verbrugge  
*Co-principal*
Grant Chythlook
Ruben Rhodes
Isaac Ward
Ezzy Allwright
Sam Spanos
Ben Liu
Sara Zahn
Donovan Mahoney
Miles Brooks
Zoey Dougherty
Faith Felton

**Double Bass**
Anna Lea Hyer  
*Principal*
Violet Bowie
Mary Grace Cope
Casi LeBlanc**
Natalie Custer
Erik Dobler***
Lily Gallipeo***

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Yile Guo
Lena So

**Oboe**
Mark Boedefeld  
*Co-principal*
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Kayla Peppinger  
*Co-principal*
Sophia Nagl-Mermelstein
Charlotte Fontana

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Ali Strand**
Max Erickson
Kolter Kalt
Gavin Baker
Abigail Spear*

**Bassoon**
Xavier Librechte**
Kaitlyn Paculba

**Horn**
John Wellmann  
*Principal*
Evan Hagen**

**Trumpet**
Sean Evanick**

**Trombone**
Olivia Martin  
*Principal*
Erik Rueb*
Terrance *

**Tuba**
Zach Johnson  
*Principal*
Kristian Nudlash-Barger*

**Percussion**
Baylee Williams  
*Principal*
Isaac Klemm
Maggie Runty
Ashton Bednar
Kade Bissell**

**Harp**
Maddie Sivils  
*Principal*

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Program
Anchorage Youth Symphony
Conductor: Maestro Bruce Wood, Ph.D.

Toccata in the Style of Frescobaldi
Gaspar Cassadó

Piano Concerto, No. 1, Opus 25
*Molto allegro con fuoco in G minor*
Felix Mendelssohn
Soloist: Ben Liu, piano

Intermission - 15 minutes

Hungarian Dances, No. 6
Johannes Brahms
Conducted by: Evan Hagen

Symphony No. 8 in B Minor
*“Unfinished”*
Allegro Moderato
Franz Schubert

Poet and Peasant Overture
Franz von Suppe
Soloists: Bentley Altman, cello
Josiah Verbrugge, cello
A toccata is a virtuosic piece designed to show off the performer's “touch.” In the case of Cassadó’s Toccata, transcribed by Hans Kindler, the music has rapid runs, high harmonies, and beautiful full, romantic chord structures. Cassadó attributed his Toccata, (originally written for cello) to Frescobaldi (1583-1644), but this was probably a fabrication in order to gain notoriety for his composition. When Kindler made an orchestration of it, the piece became famous and has been played by major orchestras ever since.

Piano Concerto, No. 1, Opus 25
Molto allegro con fuoco in G minor
Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847)
Soloist: Benjamin Liu

With our AYS Concerto Competition winner Ben Liu, piano, we are diving in again to experience what it is like to collaborate with a soloist. With youth orchestras, so much is new; this is Ben’s first concerto performance with an orchestra, and this orchestra’s first performance with a pianist since any of these musicians became members. The solo piano will announce itself with almost a defiant statement rather than a long orchestral introduction. Chief among the orchestra’s challenges will be how to support Ben, and when to lead in the interludes that he is not playing.
Hungarian Dances, No. 6
Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)

One of Brahms Hungarian Dances, this number six is a delightful work that vacillates between a tranquil, almost nonchalant melody and a high-kicking festiveness that will hopefully make you feel as though you are the guest of honor at a gypsy party. The “dance” is one of those pieces that we will work on for hours in order to perform in under four minutes!

Symphony No. 8 in B Minor
Franz Schubert (1797-1828)

The first movement of Schubert’s Unfinished Symphony is great standard in orchestral literature. The Unfinished (Schubert passed away at the age of 31) has a dark, brooding nature combined with one of the most beautiful lyric melodies ever written. This work requires the orchestra to make further strides in gaining a unified, classic symphonic sound. I hope our musicians will not forget playing this work and its opportunity to be inside the art they create.

Poet and Peasant Overture
Franz von Suppe (1819-1895)
Soloists: Bentley Altman & Josiah Verbrugge

This piece is for full, romantic orchestra but substantively features our co-principal cello soloists, almost concerto-like. Full of both lyricism and flash, there is much to do for the entire group. And for those of you who sometimes hear classical pieces and think “Where have I heard that before?”, this work was featured in one of Popeye’s cartoon shorts in which he again defeats Bluto while conducting an orchestra!
Evan Hagen
Conducting Fellowship Recipient

Evan Hagen is currently a Conducting Fellow with the Alaska Youth Orchestras, acting as conductor of the Symphony School Ensembles, as well as working regularly with the Anchorage Youth Symphony as a conductor and brass coach. Born and raised in Anchorage, Alaska, Evan freelances as a hornist with the Anchorage Symphony, Opera, and Concert Chorus, while also singing in the Alaska Chamber Singers.

Before returning to Alaska from college, Evan studied horn under Dr. Jeffrey Snedeker at Central Washington University. While at university, he also pursued interests such as music history, conducting, and religious studies. Evan enjoys reading, meditating, running, and rock climbing.
Seize the moment.
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Hertz. Let’s Go!

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A program of Alaska Youth Orchestras providing teaching ensembles for youth musicians in grades 4-12
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The Anchorage Youth Symphony was formed in 1965 by Frank Pinkerton and has continued under the leadership of prominent local musicians and educators including Dewey Ehling, Kurt Pasch, Jeanne (Ray) Bruhn, Charles Gorsuch, Marlow Thomas, and, most recently, Linn Weeda.

In 1981 the Anchorage Youth Symphony Association began operating separately from the Anchorage School District and was granted 501c(3) non-profit status. Shortly thereafter the organization took adopted the name Alaska Youth Orchestras. Since then, the organization has remained an active member of the Anchorage arts community and has been a resident company of the Alaska Center for the Performing Arts since 2011.

Linn Weeda served as Music Director for 31 years, expanding the program to include coaching by local professional musicians, many who were in the youth symphony as young players. He retired in May 2021.

Maestro Bruce Wood, Ph.D., was selected as the Music Director in July 2021. Since then, he and Executive Director Denise Brown-Chythlook have expanded AYO’s education and performance programs, increasing the reach from 80 to 500 youth each year. The Anchorage Youth Symphony provides a professional performance experience for high school and college age musicians. The Symphony School program provides teaching ensembles for musicians from grades 4-12. AYO’s new outreach program, After School Music, a community partnership with Camp Fire Alaska, provides a music inspiration program in an after school care setting.

AYO is active in the Anchorage Arts community, participating in advocacy and community building efforts and sitting on the Anchorage Arts Alliance steering committee.
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Bottled water, purchased from the concessionaire or vending machines, is permitted in the theatres. Generally, food and beverages are not allowed in the theatres unless otherwise advertised.

Restrooms are located on the Street and Orchestra Levels in the Carr/Gottstein Lobby; in the Harrison Lobby, they are located on all levels. Baby changing tables are located in restrooms on Street level of the Lorene Harrison Lobby & Orchestra level of the Carr-Gottstein Lobby.

Coat Check is available on the street level of both the Lorene Harrison and Carr/Gottstein lobbies from October 1-May 1.

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- Call Center: Mon-Fri from 9am to 5pm
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